

# KULT

## THE COMPLETE RULES v1.0

### INTRODUCTION

Reality as you know it is a lie. The world we see around us is an illusion hiding True Reality, a horrible Illusion fabricated to keep humanity at bay, and to prevent our Awakening.

It was not always so. Once the Demiurge walked among us. He called himself Creator. Whether he designed the fabric of entirety, no one can say. Perhaps he was one of us, enlightened in power and possibility, or perhaps we were his equals. Perhaps he is father of all we see, and used to see. That knowledge is lost.

It was the Demiurge who forged our prison. From his citadel in the true city of Metropolis, he altered our perceptions and limited our abilities. He instilled in our bodies and souls the limitations we now regard as fact. The True Reality is only known to us as fables and fiction. This was his way.

To aid in his schemes the Demiurge created the ten Archons, immortal servants charged with ruling over the Illusion while holding humanity at bay. The mere existence of the Archons begat the existence of the Angels of Death, distorted images of the original ten Archons - a balance to their power. The Archons in turn created the Lictors, beings destined to exist among us and oversee from within. Likewise, the Lictors resulted in the creation of Razides, hideous lieutenants of the Death Angels. All had their place in the order.

Each Archon controlled a tenth of the Earth. The Lictors and their servants manipulated humans by infiltrating their realms and organizations. Astaroth, the dark twin of the Demiurge, and his Angels of Death destroyed human resistance with torture and horror in Inferno. The Illusion was strong, and humanity was content to believe the stories of creation and salvation that the Demiurge devised.

But it was not to last. Humanity, unknowingly striving to break their bonds, began to doubt the stories. By the end of the 18th century the Demiurge was losing control over the Illusion. In a final attempt to regain dominion over the slowly Awakening human race, the Archons devised a theory of the evolution of the human species and presented it through a Lictor named Darwin. This effort to give humanity an origin was designed to prevent us from looking too deeply into our past. In place of myths we were given a new belief system called "science" to further blind us.

It was futile. In the early 20th century, with control slipping further from his grasp, the Demiurge vanished without a trace. No one knows if he fled or died. Nor could they remember how or when he disappeared. Increasing numbers doubted he ever existed.

Astaroth sought out his brother, for without the Demiurge he could not exist. He found only a general lack of Faith and the personal Hells and Purgatories devised by humanity as they walked more boldly into Reality. He realized that if humanity Awakened, breaking from its prison of comfort and convenience, then his power would be threatened. He called to his Angels of Death, idle since the Demiurge vanished, and began to gather his army of the damned. Today the Death Angels sit in their Citadels within Inferno, plotting against the Archons and each other. Some have joined Astaroth while others work toward their own goals.

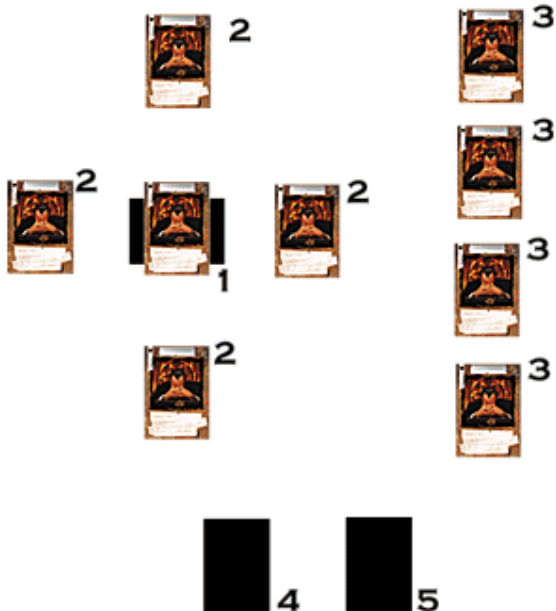
The Archons, left without a master, fight among themselves for the right to rule the cosmos. They dwell within Metropolis, forging weak alliances and manipulating their forces within the Illusion.

Even the Lictors have altered their path. While some still serve their Archon masters and attempt to keep humanity ignorant, others have joined the Angels of Death and Astaroth in their quest to bring forth the Apocalypse.

The Illusion is in shambles. More and more humans are able to peer beyond its veil. Some are able to enter Reality at will, often causing madness and death. The Illusion is weakest where we are forced to look to areas that counter what we believe is the natural order. Slums, crime scenes and battlefields may open a portal through the Illusion. That portal may lead anywhere: to Metropolis, Inferno, other worlds, private hells, anywhere. People who have broken from "normalcy" may also stumble past the Illusion. Once artifacts or drugs were the only tools that could break the barrier. Today even the act of dreaming may Awaken the dreamer and thrust the helpless soul through a portal beyond dreams and into Reality.

### THE GAME

In *KULT: The Collectable Card Game*, you take control over the Illusion as a jailer of humanity. You play an Archon or Angel of Death entering the most bloody, secret and horrible battle ever fought: the battle for Reality's destiny. You must vie for power while swaying humanity to your philosophy. As more of the unwitting population of the world leans toward your metaphysical methods of thought and action, you exponentially gain more power among your peers. As long as humanity acts in the way you desire, your place in the order will be unmatched.



*KULT: The Collectable Card Game* is based on KULT, the role-playing game of modern horror. KULT is not a game for children, as it deals with issues that some may find uncomfortable or disturbing. KULT is a game - nothing more. While many of the concepts within deal with issues of society, religion and politics, they are by no means a creed which we mean to impart to the reader and player. This is only a game.

### THE TAROTICUM

Among the chaos after the disappearance of the Demiurge, a simple deck of cards was created. This deck was called the TAROTICUM, and it could be used to manipulate the Illusion. Its cards represented the Archons, Angels of Death, the Demiurge, Astaroth and their followers and resources. The True Taroticum is lost in antiquity (for more on this mysterious device, look to the KULT RPG supplement TAROTICUM). After its loss, the Archons and Angels of Death attempted to recreate the Taroticum in their own manner, with limited results. None is as powerful as the true Taroticum, yet each has the potential for untold creation and destruction. During this game, each player will be using their own form of the Taroticum deck to manipulate the forces of Reality in their quest for domination.

The modern TAROTICA, represented by the cards in *KULT: The Collectable Card Game*, are divided into two primary sections: the MAJOR ARCANA and the MINOR ARCANA. The Major Arcana represent the ten Archons and the ten Angels of Death. In the game, each player plays one of these Major Arcana. The Minor Arcana consists of all the other cards. You design and use your own personal deck to manipulate the forces and powers under your control. In order to play cards and manipulate the Illusion, you need to be in control of one or more SUITS. The five Suits are SKULLS (representing Death), ROSES (representing Passion), HOURGLASSES (representing Time and Space), EYES (representing Madness) and CRESCENTS (representing Dreams). Each Major Arcanum begins with control over one or more of the Suits mentioned above. Major Arcanum cards vary in influence, some hold a small amount of influence over many Suits, while others hold a great deal of influence over only one Suit.

### THE OBJECT

Each player portrays one of the Archons or Angels of Death that is vying for control over Reality and the Illusion. To accomplish this, you must begin by forming a MYSTIC CROSS, a structured organization of Minor Arcana cards that represents your power over humanity. Once you have begun establishing your Mystic Cross, you may start RECRUITING the population of the Illusion and SWAY them toward your way of thinking. This is represented by moving POPULATION MARKERS (Pop Markers) into your Mystic Cross. You may also affect the actions of the BEINGS that inhabit Reality and the Illusion to help your cause. If you are able to Sway a predetermined number of Population Markers into your HUB (the center of your Mystic Cross, here your grip on their lives is strongest), before your adversaries, you have won the game!

Swaying Population is only a part of the game. The manipulation of Population Markers serves as a primary goal, but it actually occurs in the background. Much of KULT is spent interacting with your adversaries and ensuring that your influence is strong. Not only must you maintain your hold on the Population Markers, but you must also gather your resources to take the offensive against the forces of your adversaries and defend your quest for power.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

At least two people are needed to play KULT, although the game may be played by any number of people. For the sake of clarity, these rules assume that there are two players.

Each player must have their own deck of cards. Each Starter Deck includes 58 Minor Arcanum cards and 2 Major Arcanum cards. You may only use one Major Arcanum in a game, choose one and set the other one aside. Use the cards you received with this rulebook or design a deck of your own based on the cards you possess. Designing your own deck is one of the beauties of KULT; guidelines are found in the DESIGNING A DECK section later in these rules.

In addition to your decks, you need a number of markers to keep track of Population and other influencing factors. Coins, beads or gaming stones make great markers.

### THE MYSTIC CROSS

The Mystic Cross is the heart of the game. Each player builds and maintains his or her own Mystic Cross. It is this tool which represents the Major Arcanum's power and influence.

The Mystic Cross is based on the ancient "Celtic Cross" method used for Tarot readings. The Mystic Cross used in KULT is composed of a HUB and eight STATIONS. Four of these Stations make up the STAGE, and the other four make up the CAST. The Hub is present at the beginning of the game, the other Stations are filled by the player as the game progresses. The diagram below shows a completed Mystic Cross.

1. **THE HUB:** The Hub is where your Major Arcanum card sits. A face-down card is placed under the Major Arcanum card at the beginning of the game. This card is unknown to all players and may be used as a Wager card (see THE WAGER later in the rules).
2. **THE STAGE:** The four Stations surrounding the Hub are referred to as the Stage. Each Station in the Stage is defined by its position. The Station to the top of your Hub is the NORTH Station, the Station to the right is the EAST, to the left is the WEST, and at the bottom is the SOUTH Station. Usually you will play cards that represent the world, the Illusion, Reality and KULT's general environment in the Stage during the game.
3. **THE CAST:** The four Stations to the right of the Stage represent your Cast. The Cast Stations are also referred to by their position. The top spot is called the First Station, followed by the Second, Third and finally the Fourth Station closest to you at the bottom. Usually you will deploy Beings who will link you to the unwitting masses of the world in the Cast during the game.
4. **THE DRAW PILE:** This pile is the one to draw cards from at the beginning of your turn to replenish your hand. If you run out of cards in your Draw Pile, shuffle your Discard Pile to form a new pile.
5. **THE DISCARD PILE:** Your discarded cards are placed here. In KULT, all discards are placed face-down. You may look through your discard pile at any time, but your adversary may not.

## **THE CARDS**

### **MAJOR ARCANA**

Each Major Arcanum card represents one of the Archons or Angels of Death. You only use one Major Arcanum card in a game, since this card also represents you, the player.

**NAME:** This is the name of the Archon or Angel of Death that you are playing. The background color of the card is very important. It refers to the Major Arcanum's **AFFILIATION**. The Affiliation of the Major Arcanum tells which higher power the Major Arcanum follows. A **RED** background indicates that the Major Arcanum is an Archon, a patron of the Demiurge, while a **BLUE** background means that the Major Arcanum is an Angel of Death, a servant of Astaroth.

**SUITS:** Surrounding the picture of the Major Arcanum are four icons. These represent the Suits that the Major Arcanum controls. Some Major Arcanum have one each of four different suits, meaning that this Major Arcanum has a small amount of influence over many Suits. Others have two each of two different Suits, and a few Major Arcanum have three of one Suit. This means that the Major Arcanum is very limited in its influence, but is very strong in its specialized area.

**NOTES:** Each Major Arcanum has a special ability and a **HIERARCHY** number. This text tells you what the special ability is and which Hierarchy number the Major Arcanum has. The Hierarchy number is used to determine which Major Arcanum (and therefore which player) goes first in the game.

### **THE MINOR ARCANA**

All the other cards are called Minor Arcana cards. There are five types of Minor Arcana cards: **BEINGS**, **REGIONS**, **INFLUENCE CARDS**, **SPELLS** and **COMMANDMENTS**. Each has a unique look and style.

#### **BEINGS**

These cards represent the living (and not-quite-living) beings that inhabit the world of KULT. There are four types of Beings: **LICTORS**, **RAZIDES**, **CREATURES** and **PAWNS**. Each card will identify its type in the Notes section. Being cards have sand colored backgrounds and a Wing icon after the title.

**LICTORS** and **RAZIDES:** Lictors are the primary servants of the Archons. They were given human form and placed within the Illusion to manipulate humanity and prevent their Awakening. Razides are much like Lictors, but controlled by the Angels of Death.

**CREATURES:** Reality is filled with numerous creatures. Some break through into the Illusion, where they hunt and torture its inhabitants. Others are found in Metropolis, Inferno or in the realms of Death, Madness, Passion, Dreams or Time and Space.

**PAWNS:** Pawns are the human tools used by the Archons, Angels of Death and their servants to further their goals. Most Pawns are just that, mere puppets unaware of their role or their puppeteers. A few have broken the barrier of the Illusion and are able to peer into Reality, manipulate the forces of magic, and cavort with their demon captors. Others have completely awakened and are able to traverse the realms of Reality at will.

Each Being card has the following features:

**NAME:** This is name of the card, which is also the name of the person or thing that the card represents.

**COMBAT VALUE / AFFILIATION:** The number in the top right corner is the Being's Combat Value (or CV). The color of the liquid behind the CV refers to the card's Affiliation. A RED liquid stain (blood) indicates that it cosmically and philosophically leans toward the Demiurge, while a BLUE stain (stearin) indicates that the card leans toward Astaroth. Some liquid stains are WHITE (water), which means that the card has no particular leaning and is considered NEUTRAL.

**STATION INDICATORS:** There are 8 Station Indicators on each card. They are the small stylized triangles around the picture and along the right edge of the card. The four Indicators around the picture correspond to the four Stage Stations of a Mystic Cross. The four Indicators to the right of the picture correspond to the four Cast Stations. Some indicators are empty while others are filled with a red highlight. If a Station indicator is highlighted, that card may occupy the respective Station of a Mystic Cross. If it is empty, the card may not be placed there.

**SUITS:** The Suits are used to determine if a Major Arcanum has the correct power and control to play the card. In order to play the Being card, you have to be in control of the listed Suits. If you do not have control over the required Suits, you may not play the card.

**NOTES:** This text explains the card's special abilities, effects and limitations.

### **REGIONS**

Regions are specific areas either in Reality or the Illusion that affect your Mystic Cross. A Region may be as immense as a country in the Illusion or as small as a room in which vile acts occurred. Region cards have wooden backgrounds and a Tower icon after the title.

Each Region card has the following features:

**NAME:** This is the name of the card, which is also the name of the place the card represents.

**COMBAT VALUE / AFFILIATION:** Normally, a Region card does not have a Combat Value, but quite a few do have Affiliations. The color of the liquid indicates the Region's Affiliation. If the card does not have a liquid stain, it is considered neutral.

**STATION INDICATORS:** Like with Beings, you may only play the card on the red-highlighted Stations.

**SUITS:** This indicates the Suits required to play the Region card.

**NOTES:** This text explains the card's special abilities, effects and limitations.

### **INFLUENCE**

Influence cards have a wide range of powers and uses. Influence cards are kept in play and are usually attached to a Station or a card. Influence cards can only be played during your turn, unless the cards says otherwise. Influence cards have purple backgrounds and a Special Star icon after the title.

Each Influence card has the following features:

**NAME:** This is the name of the card, which also is the name of the effect or item the card represents.

**COMBAT VALUE / AFFILIATION:** Normally, a Influence card does not have a Combat Value, but some may have Affiliations. The color of the liquid indicates the card's Affiliation. If the card does not have a liquid stain, it is considered neutral. Some Influence cards will have number with a plus or minus in front of it on the liquid stain. This is a modification to the Influenced card's CV.

**STATION INDICATORS:** Like with Beings, you may only play the card on the red-highlighted Stations.

**SUITS:** This indicates the Suits required to play the Influence card.

**NOTES:** This text explains the card's special abilities, effects and limitations.

### **SPELLS**

Spells are used by SPELLCASTERS to influence the game. Many Beings are Spellcasters, and are designated as such in the Notes section on their cards. Only Spellcasters may cast Spells. Each Spell card states when it may be cast. Spell cards have green backgrounds.

Each Spell card has the following features:

**NAME:** This is the name of the card, which is also the name of the effect the card represents.

**COMBAT VALUE / AFFILIATION:** Normally, a Spell card does not have a Combat Value, but some may have Affiliations. The color of the liquid indicates the card's Affiliation. If the card does not have a liquid stain, it is considered neutral. Some Spell cards will have number with a plus or minus in front of it on the liquid stain. This is a modification to the Influenced card's CV.

**STATION INDICATORS:** The red-highlighted Stations indicates where the Spellcaster may cast the Spell.

**SUITS:** This indicates the Suits required to cast the Spell.

**NOTES:** This text explains the card's special abilities, effects and limitations.

### **COMMANDMENTS**

Commandment cards break into the normal action of the game. Unless otherwise stated, they may be played at any time, and they are often used during an Adversary's turn or during an Attack. Commandment have turquoise backgrounds. A Commandment card does not require a Suit-match in order to played and is not restricted by Station Indicators.

Each Commandment card has the following features:

**NAME:** This is the name of the card, which is also the name of the effect or item the card represents.

**COMBAT VALUE / AFFILIATION:** Normally, a Commandment card does not have a Combat Value, but some may have Affiliations. The color of the liquid indicates the card's Affiliation. If the card does not have a liquid stain, it is considered neutral. Some Commandment cards will have number with a plus or minus in front of it on the liquid stain. This is a modification to the Influenced card's CV.

**NOTES:** This text explains the card's special abilities, effects and limitations.

## **PLAYING THE GAME**

### **TWO IMPORTANT RULES**

1. In all circumstances, if the rules on a card go against the rules found in this manual, the rules on the card takes precedence.
2. You may gain control over other player's cards at certain times during the game. You are never allowed to keep those cards after the game is over.

## **SETTING UP**

1. Make sure both players have plenty of space on the table in front of them.
2. **REVEAL THE MAJOR ARCANA:** Each player simultaneously reveals the Major Arcanum card he or she intends to play in this game. When more than one player reveals the same Major Arcanum, the players showing the same Major Arcana must exchange decks and play this struggle with those decks.
3. **SHUFFLE YOUR DECK:** Each player shuffles his or her deck and offers it to an adversary to cut.
4. **MARK YOUR MYSTIC CROSS HUB:** Each player deals one card face-down, horizontal in front of him or her to indicate the Hub. Do not look at this card. This card can be used as a wager card (see THE WAGER later in the rules).
5. **PLACE YOUR MAJOR ARCANUM CARD ON YOUR HUB CARD** so that they form a cross.
6. **CREATE THE POPULATION POOL:** There are two different types of games to play: the struggle for control over a continent or the struggle for control over the world. The main difference between the two types is the time it takes to complete a game.

### **STRUGGLE FOR A CONTINENT**

In this game, you struggle to take control of a single continent. Place five (5) Population Markers in the Population Pool for each player participating in the game and deduct one (-1) from the total. The first player to Sway 5 Population Markers into his or her Hub wins!

### **STRUGGLE FOR THE WORLD**

In this game, you struggle to take control over the entire world. Place ten (10) Population Markers in the Population Pool for each player participating in the game and deduct one (-1) from the total. The first player to Sway 10 Population Markers into his or her Hub wins!

Place the proper number of Population Markers at the center of the table. These markers form the Population Pool.

The pool abstractly represents the population of the world. It is this population that you are trying to Sway to your side. The Markers used in the Population Pool should NEVER be used for any other purpose in the game! Remove any extra Markers from the table.

7. EACH PLAYER TAKES TWO POPULATION MARKERS FROM THE POPULATION POOL: Place these markers on your Major Arcanum card. They represent the Population already swayed to your Major Arcanum's belief. These Markers are included in the amount of Markers you need to have in your Hub in order to win.
8. EACH PLAYER DRAWS SEVEN CARDS: Draw seven cards from your Draw Pile to form your hand.
9. DETERMINE WHICH PLAYER GOES FIRST: Each Major Arcanum card has a Hierarchy number. The player whose Major Arcanum has the lowest Hierarchy number plays first. In case of a tie, peacefully determine who goes first.

## OVERVIEW OF GAME PLAY

In KULT, players take turns manipulating the Population Markers under their control to utilize the cosmos to better their positions while lessening the abilities of their adversaries. At the beginning of the game you only have control over the four Suits on your Major Arcanum card. You may gain control over other Suits throughout the game by the play of cards or by REPELLING Population Markers. When you proclaim cards into the Cast of your Mystic Cross, you may automatically receive Population Markers every turn. By turning these cards face-down, you gradually move Population Markers toward the Hub of your Mystic Cross. During the Perform Deeds step, you will put cards into play and perform special maneuvers stated on the cards in play. Once you have performed all the Deeds you wish (or are able to), you may make an attack on an adversary's Being. Then your turn ends by flipping all your face-down cards face-up again, and your adversary takes his or her turn.

## THE ORDER OF PLAY

During your turn, you follow an order of play consisting of seven steps. When you have completed all the steps, your adversary's turn starts. Each step must be completed before going to the next.

1. DRAW CARDS
2. SWAY POPULATION MARKERS
3. RECRUIT POPULATION MARKERS
4. PERFORM DEEDS
5. ATTACK
6. DISCARD ONE CARD FROM YOUR HAND
7. TURN YOUR CARDS FACE UP

## STEP ONE: DRAW CARDS

Draw enough cards from your Draw Pile to fill your hand to seven cards. If you draw the last card from your Draw Pile and need more cards, simply shuffle your Discard Pile to form a new Draw Pile and continue drawing. If your hand already contains seven cards, do not draw any cards.

## STEP TWO: SWAY POPULATION MARKERS

You may SWAY Population Markers closer to your Hub during this part of your turn. In order to Sway a Population Marker, you must move it from a face-up card to another face-up card that is allowed to hold a Population Marker.

Each Sway involves moving ONE Population Marker from one card to another. You may Sway Population Markers from cards in your Cast to cards your Stage, or from cards in your Stage to your Hub.

After you have moved the Population Marker you must TURN the card it left, and the destination card (Swaying a Population Marker from a card in your Stage to your HUB does not cause your Major Arcanum to Turn).

You may perform any number of Population Sways as long as you are moving the Population Marker from a face-up card to a face-up card and TURNING both over.

## TURNING CARDS

Often during the game you will be given the option to TURN a card. This is usually done either to perform a Sway step or to gain the special effect listed on a card. When you Turn a card, you flip the card over so it is face-down on the table. A card that is Turned may not perform any actions until it has been flipped over again. The ONLY time you may flip a Turned card over is at the end of your turn.

When a card is Turned, all cards that are attached to that card are Turned over as well. Any Population Markers on the card remain on it. Sometimes a card will say that you may Turn it over to perform a special effect listed on the card. You may Turn the card and perform the listed effect at any time unless the card says otherwise.

## **HOLDING POPULATION MARKERS**

As you form your Mystic Cross, you will be able to move Population Markers from the Population Pool toward your Hub. As the Population Markers make their journey, they move from the Population Pool to an available card in your Cast to an available card in your Stage and finally from the Stage to your Hub. Each and every Being and Region in the Minor Arcana of KULT is allowed to hold ONE Population Marker, unless the card states otherwise. Your Major Arcanum card (sitting in your Hub) may hold any number of Population Markers. Influence, Spell and Commandment cards may not hold Population Markers unless the card states otherwise.

## **STEP THREE: RECRUIT POPULATION MARKERS**

You may now RECRUIT new Population Markers from the Population Pool into your Mystic Cross. You may move one Population Marker from the Population Pool onto every face-up card in your Cast that is able to hold the new Population Marker. This Sway is the result of the constant behind-the-scenes actions of your forces, affecting the mental, physical, psychological and cosmic states of the inhabitants of the Illusion. Recruiting Population Markers does NOT cause cards to TURN

You may not Recruit if you don't have any cards in your CAST, or if a Cast member is Turned or already holds all the Population Markers it can. You may not Recruit Population Markers if the Population Pool is empty.

## **STEP FOUR: PERFORM DEEDS**

You may now perform the two deeds, PROCLAIM STATION and INFLUENCE, as many times as you wish or are able. When you perform either one of the two deeds, you are required to make a SUIT-MATCH. This means that you have to compare the number and types of Suits you control to the number and types of Suits listed on the card you wish to play.

An important thing to remember is that the Suits you control are NOT "used up" during your turn. This means that if you control three SKULLS and an EYE, you may play a card with two SKULLS on it and still have control over three SKULLS and an EYE after the card has been played. So the Suits your Major Arcanum controls are NOT exhausted as cards are played. There is always a constant flow and control from the Mystic Cross.

## **PROCLAIM STATION**

When you perform a PROCLAIM deed, you place a Being or a Region from your hand into your Mystic Cross ð you are "Proclaiming it on that Station". Each Station of your Mystic Cross may only contain ONE base card. Other cards may be attached to that card (through Influencing or Commandment card play). If you would like to place a card on a certain Station, and there's already a card Proclaimed there, you may not Proclaim your card there unless the card in that Station is somehow discarded.

To place a card on a Station in your Mystic Cross, the card's Station indicator must be highlighted in red. For example, if the card's North, East, Second and Third Stations are highlighted, that card may only be Proclaimed to one of those four Stations. It may not be Proclaimed to the West, South, First or Fourth Stations.

To Proclaim a card on a Station, perform the following Steps.

1. COMPARE THE AFFILIATION of the Proclaimed card with the Affiliation of your Major Arcanum card. If they have the same color, you may proclaim the card. A WHITE Affiliation is neutral. A card without a liquid stain indicating the card's Affiliation is also considered neutral. Neutral cards can be played by all Major Arcana.

MATCH SUITS you control to those that are listed on the card you want to play. If you control all Suits listed on the card, you may Proclaim it on the Station. If not, you must first gain control of the Suits you lack in order to play the card. The primary way to gain temporary control of a Suit is to REPEL a Population Marker (see Repelling Population Markers below).

If a card has the same Suits on it more than once (for example, if a card shows two Crescents and a Rose), you must be able to match up the same number of Suits. For the card above, you would need to be in control of TWO Crescents and ONE Rose to play it.

2. SHOW your adversary the Proclaimed card, and announce on which Station in your Mystic Cross you intend to place the card. Your Adversary may examine the card if he or she wishes.
3. PLACE the card on the Station you indicated.
4. EFFECTS BEGIN. If the card has special effects, they take effect at this time. A Being may perform an attack during the same turn it is Proclaimed.

## INFLUENCE

When you perform an INFLUENCE deed, you play any Influence card to affect a card already in play, a Population Marker, an adversary or an aspect of the game. Each Influence card states who or what it may Influence. Usually an Influence card indicates that it should be ATTACHED to the card it is influencing. When an Influence card attaches itself to another card, that attachment is permanent, and it may not be broken unless the base card is discarded or a card is played which detaches the bond. Some Influence cards are also limited by Station Indicators.

Most Influence cards will read INFLUENCE AND ATTACH TO A PAWN or something similar. Unless specified otherwise, this means that you may play the Influence card on any one of the type of card mentioned in play, no matter in which Mystic Cross the target cards resides. For example, a card that states INFLUENCE AND ATTACH TO A BEING may be attached to any Being in play. Playing an Influence card is very similar to Proclaiming a Station:

1. COMPARE THE AFFILIATION just like the Proclaim Station deed.
2. MATCH SUITS just like the Proclaim Station deed.
3. SHOW the Influence card to your adversary.
4. EFFECTS BEGIN as soon as you show the card.
5. ATTACH or DISCARD. Attach the Influence card to the card or thing you are Influencing, or discard the Influence if it is a one-use effect.

## REPELLING POPULATION MARKERS

This is a good time to discuss the concept of REPELLING. Repelling Population is not really a deed, but it is explained here because you will do it often while Proclaiming a Station or playing a Influence card. There will be times when you need to gain temporary control over a Suit in order to play a vital card. A player may temporarily gain control of a Suit by Repelling a Population Marker. This is done by moving ONE Population Marker ONE step outward in your Mystic Cross. Examples: Move one Marker from your Hub to a member of your Stage, or from a member of your Stage to a member of your Cast, or from a member of your Cast to the Population Pool.

For every step a Population Marker is moved outward, you gain control over any ONE Suit. The control gained over a Suit by Repelling Population lasts until the end of your turn (or until the end of the current player's turn if you Repelled Population during another player's turn). You must state which Suit you gain, and you may not change this later in the turn. For example, If you Repel to gain a SKULL, you gain control over one extra SKULL until the end of the current turn. You may Repel any number of Population Markers at any time, as long as you still have Population Markers in your Mystic Cross. For example, it is possible to move a Population Marker from your Hub all the way to the Population Pool and gain control over three SUITS of your choice.

If you don't have a card in your Stage or Cast to which to Repel a Population Marker, you can skip over them, but you don't gain control over a Suit for each step you skip. For instance, you could move a marker directly from your Hub to the Population Pool (skipping over your Stage and Cast) for control over ONE Suit. Or you could move a Population Marker from your Hub to a card in your Stage and directly from there to the Population Pool for control over TWO Suits.

You may Repel a Population Marker onto a face-down card, but normal Population Marker limits still apply. If a card already has as many Population Markers as it can hold (this is always ONE marker unless a card says otherwise), then you cannot Repel more markers onto it. If you Repel a Population Marker to a face-up card, this does not cause the card to Turn.

Many cards will allow you to Repel a Population Marker to perform some special effect listed on the card. If you do this, you gain the effect from the card, but you do NOT gain control of a Suit. Unless the card says otherwise, you may Repel multiple Population Markers to gain the effect of a card multiple times. For example, the NACHTKINDER may Repel a Population Marker to gain +2 to its CV while in combat. If you Repelled three Population Markers, the Nachtkinder's CV would be at +6 for that combat.

## STEP FIVE: ATTACK

A face-up Being in your CAST may attack during this step. You may only perform ONE attack with ONE of your Beings per turn. A player may select not to attack.

Follow these rules if you wish to attack.

1. ANNOUNCE which face-up Being in your Mystic Cross will Attack, and which face-up Being is the target. Only a Being in a Cast may attack or be the target of an attack. A Being in the Stage may not attack or be attacked, nor may a face-down Being. Your Being may attack any other Being in play, even a Being in your own Mystic Cross.



2. **COMPARE** the Combat Values of the attacking Being and its target. The attacker may play cards to modify the Combat Values of the combatants. Then the target's player may do the same. Other players in a multi-player game also have the chance to modify either combatant's Combat Value. Players take turns responding until all players pass. Be sure to factor in any Combat Value modifiers that may be supplied to either the attacker or the target through attachments or other effects. If a modifier ever drops a Being's CV to 0 or below, it is still valid, and may defeat a CV that is even lower (a CV of -2 will beat a CV of -3 or lower).
3. **DETERMINE** the winner. The combatant with the higher total Combat Value is the winner. The loser is killed and discarded along with all of its Attachments. If the loser was holding a Population Marker, it is moved to the winner, but only if the winning Being is able to hold the Population Marker. If not, the Population Marker is returned to the Population Pool. In case of a tie, the combat is a draw, and neither combatant is discarded and no Population Marker moved. Certain combatants have the power to win battles in case of a tie. If two such combatants tie, neither wins. The combat is truly a draw.

#### **STEP SIX: DISCARD ONE CARD FROM YOUR HAND.**

You may discard one card from your hand. This step is optional.

#### **STEP SEVEN: TURN YOUR CARDS FACE UP.**

Simply turn all your "face-down" cards "face-up" again. This ends your turn.

### **WINNING THE GAME**

#### **STRUGGLE FOR A CONTINENT**

In this game, you struggle to take control of a single continent.  
The first player to Sway 5 Population Markers into his or her Hub wins!

#### **STRUGGLE FOR THE WORLD**

In this game, you struggle to take control over the entire world. The first player to Sway 10 Population Markers into his or her Hub wins!

Sometimes Population Markers can be eliminated, making the game much harder to win. When this happens, the first player who manages to sway either the regular target number of Population Markers (either 5 or 10 depending on the Struggle type) OR the majority of the remaining Population Markers into his or her Hub wins!

For example, if you were playing a two-player Struggle for the World and there were only 16 Population Markers remaining, the first player to Sway 9 markers would win. However, if you were in a three-player Struggle for a Continent and there were 12 Population Markers left, you would still only need 5 markers to win.

### **OTHER RULES**

#### **COMMANDMENT CARDS**

Each Commandment card states on it when it may be played. The player playing a Commandment card must announce the card and its target and show it to the adversary before playing it. The card begins to take effect immediately. The Commandment card is discarded after the effect stops. This is either immediately after the effect has run its course or a time stated on the Commandment card.

#### **SPELL CARDS**

A Spell card may only be cast by a SPELLCASTER, as stated on the Being's card. Only Spellcasters under your control may cast your Spells. A Spellcaster must be in your Mystic Cross, face-up, to cast a Spell.

Each Spell card states two things: which LORE the spell is from, and when it may be cast. There are 5 magical Lores. They are the Lores of Madness, Time and Space, Dreams, Death and Passion. All Spellcasters are allowed to cast all spells unless their card says otherwise. You may only cast a Spell at the time it specifies on the Spell card. Once the spell is cast, it is discarded.

#### **UNIQUE CARDS**

Many cards state on them that they are UNIQUE. Most Lictors and Razides are Unique, as are a few others. A card which is Unique behaves exactly like the other cards, except that only one of each Unique card may be in play at any one time. In other words, if a Unique card is anywhere on the table (except for the Draw and Discard piles) another copy of that card may not be played until the first one is somehow discarded.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS IF A CARD WITH A POPULATION MARKER ON IT IS DISCARDED?**

When a card with a Population Marker on it is discarded (for whatever reason), or if the card no longer is allowed to have Population Markers on it, the Population Marker must be moved one step outward in the Mystic Cross the card was in. For example, if the Population Marker was on a card in your Stage when it was discarded, the Population Marker must be placed on an eligible card in your Cast. If there is no eligible card in the Cast, the Population Marker is returned to the Population Pool. If the discarded card was residing in the Cast, the Population Marker automatically returns to the Population Pool.

## **THE WAGER**

Players may, if they wish, agree to play a game of KULT for stakes. When playing for stakes, you risk losing a valuable card or winning valuable cards from your adversaries. During the game setup, you placed a card underneath your Major Arcanum card when forming your Hub. While this card is primarily meant to add another element of chance to the game (by you not knowing which card is missing from your deck), you may choose to put this card up for stakes. If so, the winner of the game gets to keep all of the cards underneath each player's Major Arcanum card.

## **EXPANDING YOUR GAME**

The Starter Set you have just purchased is only a stepping stone to a much more diverse game. There are many more cards that you can collect and use in your game. In fact, the basic KULT set is composed of 242 different Minor Arcana cards. In addition to these cards, there are 20 Major Arcana cards.

You can acquire more of these cards in two ways. First, you can buy more Starter Sets because each one contains a random assortment of the available cards. Or you can buy Boosters, smaller packs of KULT cards.

Each KULT card has a rarity factor. Some cards are common and very easy to collect. Others are uncommon, which are pretty scarce and more difficult to find. The rest are rare, which means that there are few of these cards available, and it's quite difficult to acquire them all. Only the 20 Major Arcanum cards are rare in the KULT basic set, the Minor Arcanum cards are either common or uncommon.

## **DESIGNING A DECK**

You may only use one Major Arcanum card during the game, as that card represents you, the player. Your deck may consist of any number of Minor Arcanum cards, but the total card count must be at least 58 Minor Arcanum cards. You may not have more than THREE of the exact same card in your deck. For instance, you can't have more than three CURSE cards in your deck. You may never put Major Arcanum cards in your deck.

Once you've played KULT a few times and increased the size of your collection, you'll find deck building challenging and rewarding. It ensures that your games will always be unique and interesting.

Of course, you can also have a great deal of fun by shuffling your entire collection and playing with whatever cards happen to come up. If you like, you can try doing this and playing a "rubber match". This means that you play a number of games in a row (say seven) and keep track of how many games each person wins. It doesn't matter how you play, as long as everyone is having fun!

## **IMPORTANT TERMS**

The KULT setting is rich and diverse, as is the KULT game. There are a number of terms that may seem new to you. The following is a list of these major terms. Most of these terms are detailed in the rules above, but are given here again for your clarification and convenience.

The terms are placed into three major subsections, depending on what they are primarily associated with. KULT TERMS are specific to the entire KULT setting. They certainly have importance in this game, but they mostly invoke the story behind the game. GAME TERMS are used through the game itself. CARD TERMS are found on some individual KULT cards.

### **KULT TERMS**

**ANGEL OF DEATH:** One of the ten servants of Astaroth. They are distorted images of the original ten Archons. With Astaroth searching for the Demiurge, they are free to pursue their own schemes of world conquest.

**ARCHON:** One of the ten servants of the Demiurge. They have worked the longest to create and maintain the Illusion. With the disappearance of the Demiurge, they are torn between maintaining the Illusion and allowing our Awakening.

**ASTAROTH:** The dark twin of the Demiurge and ruler of Inferno. He claims the Demiurge is a lighter shadow of himself. He is grievously stricken by the disappearance, and has searched nearly all of Reality for his brother, but to no avail.

**THE DEMIURGE:** The original jailer of humanity, and fabricator of the Illusion. No one knows for sure who the Demiurge was; he has not been seen since our second World War, and the memory of him is fading. Ironically, it is Humanity who remembers him best, possibly since our history is tied so closely to his.

**THE ILLUSION:** The world of humanity as we know it is actually only an Illusion masking the True Reality. It is an elaborate jail devised by the Demiurge and maintained by the Archons to limit our potential, and prevent our evolution.

**INFERNO:** The long-time home of Astaroth and the Angels of Death, now virtually emptied. A vast torture chamber where those who believe in the punishment of sins go after death. Its legions now serve Astaroth in his search for the Demiurge and quest for eternal conquest.

**LICTOR:** Lieutenants of the Archons created to guard humanity within the Illusion, ensuring that we are kept uninformed and preventing our Awakening. These jailers continue to do the Archons' bidding, but their tasks are no longer so definite.

**METROPOLIS:** The One True City, our ancient home, and the model for all cities on earth. All cities in the Illusion contain gates to Metropolis, and all things are possible once within its realm. The city stretches into eternity. All who have Awakened may peer upon its dark ruin.

**RAZIDE:** Creatures created by Astaroth and his Angels of Death to serve in Inferno and torment the sinners. Some have accompanied Astaroth and the Death Angels into our world. They exist entirely in our world, and enforce the wills of the Death Angels from within.

**REALITY:** Those humans who have Awakened are able to peer beyond the veil of the Illusion and into Reality. It is everything possible and impossible. It is infinite. Among the most prominent features of Reality are Metropolis, Inferno, and the five Realms.

**REALMS:** There are five Realms. Each one lies beyond a fundamental cosmic truth: Death, Madness, Time & Space, Passion and Dreams. Even those who have Awakened are sometimes unable to traverse into the Realms, and sometimes those locked into the Illusion are able to traverse them at will with no knowledge of Reality.

## **GAME TERMS**

**ATTACK:** Each turn one Being in your Cast may attempt to destroy any other Being in any Cast, even a Being in the same Cast. The loser is discarded, and the victor gains any Population Markers held by the loser.

**BEING:** One of the living entities inhabiting Reality and/or the Illusion. There are four types of Being: Lictors, Razides, Creatures and Pawns.

**CAST:** The four vertical stations along the right edge of the Mystic Cross. The cards placed there represent those forces which are closest to humanity and most able to persuade the population of the Illusion as you wish. Beings reside in Casts and may attack one another.

**COMBAT VALUE or CV:** This number (found in the liquid stain) represents the ability of that card to give and receive damage in combat. The higher the number, the better the warrior.

**COMMANDMENT:** A card that is able to be played at various times in the game to break into the action and change the current situation.

**CREATURE:** A type of Being. Creatures are anything that is not a Lictor, Razide or Pawn. They are typically monstrous in appearance and action.

**DEED:** One of the two actions you are allowed to perform during your Perform Deeds step. The two deeds are Proclaim Station and Influence. They may each be performed any number of times during your turn.

**FLIPPING:** Another term for returning face-up a card that has been Turned.

**HOLDING:** The ability for Being and Region cards to store and maintain Population Markers as they travel from the Population Pool to the Hub of a Mystic Cross. Each Being and Region in KULT is allowed to hold one Population Marker, unless the card says otherwise. The Major Arcanum card on your Hub may hold any number of Population Markers.

**HUB:** The center of your Mystic Cross. It consists of your Major Arcanum card and a face-down card underneath. It represents the center of your power and ability. The goal of the game is to move Population Markers to your Hub.

**INFLUENCE:** A card type and the name of the deed which you may perform in order to play that type of card. Influence cards may only be played during your turn (during an Influence deed) and affect some aspect of the game, usually the abilities of a

Major Arcanum, Being, Region, Population Marker or other Influence card. Most Influence cards state that they are attached to the cards they Influence, in which case the attachment is permanent.

**MAJOR ARCANUM:** One of the 20 cards in KULT representing the ten Archons and ten Angels of Death. Each player plays one of these powers during a game, and uses the appropriate Major Arcanum card to show who he or she is playing. The Major Arcanum card shows which four Suits the player controls at the beginning of the game and what special abilities the player has. The plural form is Major Arcana.

**MINOR ARCANUM:** Every card that is not a Major Arcanum card is a Minor Arcanum card. Minor Arcanum cards are essentially the ones you use to create your playing deck. A deck must contain at least 58 Minor Arcanum cards. The plural form is Minor Arcana.

**MYSTIC CROSS:** The heart of the KULT game. Each player maintains a Mystic Cross during the game. It is a tool, which represents the power of the player and a structure by which you move Population Markers from the Population Pool to your Hub. Each Mystic Cross has eight Stations. Each Station may hold one base card, plus any cards that are attached to that card. The Mystic Cross is composed of a Hub in the center, a Stage of four Stations surrounding the Hub, and a Cast of four Stations to the right of the Stage.

**PAWN:** A type of Being. Pawns are humans trapped in the Illusion. Some are simply unwitting accomplices to a Major Arcanum's plans, others have broken through the Illusion and are able to manipulate Reality.

**POPULATION POOL:** The group of Population Markers in the center of the playing area abstractly representing the population of the world. The Population Pool is finite. Population Markers may not be added to taken away from the Population Pool except through card play.

**POPULATION MARKER or POP MARKER:** Marker representing a portion of the world population. At no point should Population Markers be used for any other purpose.

**PROCLAIM STATION:** The act of placing a Being or region card onto one of the Stations of a player's Mystic Cross is called Proclaiming that Station. It is one of the deeds which may be performed any number of times during a player's Perform Deeds step. Since each of the eight Stations may only have one Being or region Proclaimed to it, it is important to Proclaim those cards which will be the most helpful. The only way to Proclaim a card onto a Station which already has a card is to first figure out a way to discard the card that is already there.

**RECRUIT:** Each turn, the constant endeavors of your background forces to sway the population of the world to your way of thinking bears fruit. Recruiting is automatic, provided that you are able to accept new recruits. During your Recruit Population step of each turn, you may place one Population Marker on each face-up card in your Cast that is able to receive and hold a Population Marker. These Population Markers are now a part of your Mystic Cross, and may be Swayed toward your Hub or Repelled outward to gain Suits.

**REGION:** One of the places of KULT. Region cards are Proclaimed on the Stations of your Mystic Cross. They may each hold one Population Marker, and often provide control over one or more Suits.

**REPELLING:** The act of pushing a Population Marker outward in your Mystic Cross in order to temporarily gain control of one Suit of your choice. For each Population Marker you move toward the Population Pool, you gain one Suit until the end of the current player's turn. Repelling is one of the most important aspects of KULT to master, as it directly interferes with the goal of the game, but it enables you to better your position in the game at the same time.

**SPELL:** A mystical effect conjured by Spellcasters. Each Spell comes from a particular Lore. There are five Lores (Death, Madness, Time & Space, Passion and Dreams), and they coincide with the five Realms. Spells are like Influence cards which may be played at various times in the game. Each spell will state on it when it may be played.

**STAGE:** The four Stations surrounding the Hub in a player's Mystic Cross. The Stage is the interim between the Cast and the Hub. Beings that reside in the Stage may not attack or be attacked.

**STATION:** One of the eight locations of the Mystic Cross where Region and Being cards may be Proclaimed. Each Station is also a stepping stone for a Population Marker to make its journey from the Population Pool to the Hub. Each Station may contain one Being or Region card, plus any cards that are attached to that Being or Region.

**SUITS:** Suits represent many things in KULT. Most importantly, they reveal the metaphysical tendencies of a card in the cosmos. On a more practical level, they tell what cards may be played by which Major Arcanum. There are five Suits: SKULLS (representing Death), ROSES (representing Passion), HOURGLASSES (representing Time and Space), EYES (representing Madness) and CRESCENTS (representing Dreams). A player may only play a card if he or she is in control of the number and types of Suits listed on the card to be played.

**SWAY:** The act of moving a Population Marker closer to the Hub of your Mystic Cross. When you Sway a Population Marker, you move it from a face-up card in your Cast to a face-up card in your Stage, or from a face-up card in your Stage to your Hub. After the Population Marker is moved, both cards are Turned (The Hub card does not have to Turn).

**TURNING:** The act of flipping a face-up card so it is face-down. Typically you will Turn a card after your Sway a Population Marker to or from it, but you may also Turn a face-up card in order to perform a special effect listed on the card to be Turned.

## **CARD TERMS**

**AFFILIATION:** The cosmic leaning of the card, represented by the color of the drop of liquid in the top corner (or the background color of the card in the case of Major Arcana). There are three affiliations: Red, which means the card leans toward the Demiurge (and indicates that the Major Arcanum is an Archon); Blue, which means the card leans toward Astaroth (and indicates the Major Arcanum is an Angel of Death); and White, which means the card is neutral. A player may only play a card if its affiliation is the same as his or her Major Arcanum card or is neutral.

**BINAH:** The Black Madonna. One of the ten Archons.

**CHAGIDIEL:** The Bloodstained Patriarch. One of the ten Angels of Death.

**CHESED:** The Helper. One of the ten Archons.

**CHOKMAH:** The Patriarch. One of the ten Archons.

**CV:** See COMBAT VALUE.

**DARK SECRET:** Dark secrets are just that, hideous secrets about a Being's past that it doesn't want anyone to know. They usually have a negative effect on the Being they affect. Dark Secrets are given to Beings through Influence cards.

**GAMALIEL:** The Perverted Sexuality. One of the ten Angels of Death.

**GAMICHICOTH:** The False Rescuer. One of the ten Angels of Death.

**GEBURAH:** The Judge. One of the ten Archons.

**GOLAB:** The Torturer. One of the ten Angels of Death.

**HAREB-SERAP:** The Raven of the Battlefields. One of the ten Angels of Death.

**HIERARCHY:** A number between 1 and 20 found on each Major Arcanum card. Its purpose is to determine which player takes the first turn of the game.

**HOD:** The Punisher. One of the ten Archons.

**ITEM:** Many Influence cards are listed as Items. This card represents that Item. In effect, when you Influence a card with an Item, you give that Item to the card, and the card may then use that item.

**KETHER:** The Ruler. One of the ten Archons.

**LIMITATION:** Some Beings may be given natural or supernatural constraints. These physical limitations inhibit the Being's performance. Limitations are usually given to Beings through Influence cards.

**LORE OF...:** Found on all Spell cards. There are five magical Lores: Death, Madness, Time & Space, Passion and Dreams. Some Spellcasters are only allowed to cast Spells from certain Lores.

**MALKUTH:** The Rebel. One of the ten Archons.

**NAHEMOTH:** The Defiled World. One of the ten Angels of Death.

**NETZACH:** The Victor. One of the ten Archons.

**PAWN OF...:** Each Pawn has a metaphysical tendency in the cosmos toward one of the Realms: Death, Madness, Time & Space, Passion and Dreams. This designation is used only when playing some cards.

**POP MARKER:** See POPULATION MARKER.

**POWER:** Some Beings are blessed with amazing abilities. These supernatural powers augment the Being's performance. Powers are usually given to Beings through Influence cards.

REPEL: On cards, this tells you of a special effect which will occur if you Repel a Pop Marker. See REPELLING.

SAMAEAL: The Avenger. One of the ten Angels of Death.

SATHARIEL: The Devastating Mother. One of the ten Angels of Death.

SPELLCASTER: Many Beings are designated as Spellcasters. Only they may cast Spells. You may only play a Spell card if there is a face-up Spellcaster in your Mystic Cross. Some Spellcasters may only cast Spells from certain Lores. See LORE OF....

STATION INDICATOR: The eight triangular designs found around the picture on all cards but Commandment and Major Arcanum cards. You may only play a card on a certain Station of a Mystic Cross if the Station Indicator coinciding with that Station is highlighted in red.

THAUMIEL: The Unjust Ruler. One of the ten Angels of Death.

TIPHARETH: The Spider in the Web. One of the ten Archons.

TOGARINI: Protector of the Deathconjurers. One of the ten Angels of Death.

TURN: On cards, this tells you of a special effect which will occur if you Turn the card face-down. See TURNING.

UNIQUE. Some cards are designated as Unique. Only one of each Unique card may be in play at any one time.

WEAPON: Many Influence cards that are designated as Items are also designated as Weapons. This indicates that the Item is also considered a Weapon. See ITEM.

YESOD: The Founder. One of the ten Archons.

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